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All persons are by nature free and independent, and have certain natural and unalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and of pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness.

-- Article 1, Section 1, New Jersey State Constitution

Treaties do not trump constitutional liberties

April 2, 2013
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Arms Trade Treaty agreed to today by the United Nations (UN) is a threat to Americans' Constitutional liberty. I urge you to reject that treaty. If you sign it, and if the U.S. Senate ratifies the treaty, Texas will lead the charge to have the treaty overturned in court as a violation of the U.S. Constitution.

America is exceptional in part because our Constitution safeguards our individual liberties -- including the right to keep and bear arms enshrined in the Second Amendment. During your reelection campaign, you consistently claimed to support Second Amendment rights. Yet the day after you won reelection, you announced your support for the Arms Trade Treaty, a UN agreement on firearms restrictions. That treaty:

- Fails to recognize the fundamental, individual right to keep and bear arms or the right to defend one's family, person, and property;
- Empowers a new UN bureaucracy focused on firearms restrictions that will be run by international bureaucrats who are not accountable to the people of the United States;
- Employs vague and sweeping language that could be used for any number of future restrictions on Second Amendment rights; and
- Places no defined limits on the UN's power to interfere with Second Amendment rights.

The UN has concluded its negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty.

It is now up to you to sign it - or reject it. Do not sign this treaty.

Agreeing to the treaty does more than trample Second Amendment rights. It also threatens to erode all liberties guaranteed to Americans in the Constitution by establishing the precedent that the UN has some level of authority to govern our lives. The very reason we fought for independence was to free ourselves from dictates by leaders in other lands. This treaty contradicts the underpinning philosophy of our country.

I recognize that the ostensible purpose of the treaty is to combat the illegal international trade of weapons into third-world war zones. The treaty could, however, draw law-abiding gun owners and gun store operators into a complex web of bureaucratic red tape created by a new department at the UN devoted to overseeing the treaty. For instance, the treaty appears to lay the groundwork for an international gun registry overseen by the bureaucrats at the UN.

The treaty also contains a vague and open-ended call for heightened domestic regulation of imported firearms, which make up a large percentage of the market for new firearms in this country. Indeed, the most troubling aspect of the treaty is the vagueness of its language. As with most so-called international-law documents promulgated by the UN, the draft treaty is not written using the precise, unambiguous language required of a good legal document. Instead, the treaty employs sweeping rhetoric and imprecise terminology that could be used by those who seek to undermine our liberties to impose any number of restrictions on the right of law-abiding Americans to keep and bear arms.

Treaties do not trump constitutional liberties. Even if you, as the President, signed and the Senate ratified the UN Arms Trade Treaty, our Constitution remains the Supreme Law of the Land and would supersede any treaty provision that violated Second Amendment rights. When the Constitution says, "the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed," it means no one -- including the UN -- can infringe that right.

These principles have long been recognized by the United States Supreme Court. In *Reid v. Covert*, 354 U.S. 1, (1957), the Supreme Court ruled that the United States cannot use its treaty power to violate Constitutional rights. In that case, an international agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom provided that dependents of American service members stationed in the UK would be tried for crimes by military tribunal and thus deprived of certain Sixth Amendment rights, including the right to trial by jury. When the wife of an American serviceman was accused of murder and convicted by a military court, the Supreme Court reversed the conviction.

The Court rightly concluded that "no agreement with a foreign nation can confer power on the Congress, or on any other branch of Government, which is free from the restraints of the Constitution." *Id.* at 16. In a passage that should be required reading in our public schools, the Supreme Court affirmed that "The United States is entirely a creature of the Constitution. Its power and authority have no other source. It can only act in accordance with all the limitations imposed by the Constitution." *Id.* at 5-6. For that reason, the Supreme Court "has regularly and

uniformly recognized the supremacy of the Constitution over a treaty." Id. at 17.

As *Reid v. Covert* demonstrates, the Second Amendment is by no means the only constitutional right that can be threatened by international agreements. Regardless of their position on gun rights, all Americans should oppose any treaty that does not adequately protect our constitutional rights. If the Second Amendment can be trusted to international organizations that do not share our constitutional traditions, then why not the First Amendment? Why not the Fourth Amendment or the Fifth Amendment?

Our Nation's Bill of Rights is a rare and precious thing. It does not exist anywhere else in the world. And the UN cannot be trusted with it. The UN includes foreign governments that have shown hostility to the kinds of constitutional liberties guaranteed to Americans. All Americans are harmed when unaccountable international bodies like the UN are empowered to interfere with our protected freedoms.

If the Arms Trade Treaty is ratified or applied in a way that violates the right of law-abiding Americans to keep and bear arms, it will be null and void. That will be little comfort, however, to law-abiding gun owners who would no doubt wonder why the United States entered into a treaty that empowers the UN to interfere with their Second Amendment rights. Rather than reach that point, the better course is to stop the treaty before the Senate can even consider it.

If the Arms Trade Treaty is not stopped at the federal level, I -- and my fellow state attorneys general -- will take up the fight to preserve the Constitution. Ratification of this treaty would compel immediate legal action to enforce the Constitution's guarantee that the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

Sincerely,
Greg Abbott
Attorney General of Texas

Poll: 29% of Registered Voters Believe Armed Revolution May Be Necessary in Next Few Years

Twenty-nine percent of registered voters think that an armed revolution might be necessary in the next few years in order to protect liberties, according to a Public Mind poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University.

The poll asked for a response

to the statement: "In the next few years, an armed revolution might be necessary in order to protect our liberties."

Twenty-nine percent agreed, 47 percent disagreed, 18 percent neither agreed nor disagreed, 5 percent were unsure, and 1 percent refused to respond.

Among those who believe a revolution might be necessary 18 percent were Democrats, 27 percent Independents, 44 percent Republicans.

The poll found that 38 percent of Americans who believe a revolution might be necessary support additional gun control legislation compared to 62 percent of those who don't think an armed revolt will be needed.

Dan Cassino, a professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson says, "The differences in views of gun legislation are really a function of differences in what people believe guns are for. If you truly believe an armed revolution is possible in the near future, you need weapons and you're going to be wary about government efforts to take them away."

The poll of 863 registered voters was conducted nationally between April 22 and April 28, 2013.
-- Gregory Gwyn-Williams, Jr.,
cnsnews.com May 2, 2013

Thoughts for the day

"Isn't it strange that after a bombing, everyone blames the bomber ... but after a shooting, the problem is the Gun!" -- www.jfpo.org

"After every act of Islamist terrorism, we are told we should not judge all Muslims based on the actions of a few. Isn't it time the 80 million gun owners in America get the same treatment?" -- Thomas Launder, Letter to the Editor of the Arizona Republic

Exempting Congress from Obamacare

The Politico website broke the story Thursday that Congressional leaders were in hush-hush talks to exempt themselves and their staff from the wonders of ObamaCare.

House Speaker John Boehner quickly said that he's not "sneaking any language into bills to solve" a problem for Democrats. He added that full repeal of the law is "the solution to this & other ObamaCare nightmares."

We're told that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D, Md.) initiated the discussions. Mr. Reid now says he's not

trying to exempt anyone from the law. Mr. Hoyer's spokesman says only that he wants the law to be "workable for everyone."

This story goes back to 2009, when Democrats who passed ObamaCare tried repeatedly to exempt themselves or their key aides. Their problem was Sen. Chuck Grassley (R., Iowa), who for years has maintained the heretical belief that politicians ought to obey the laws they write for everyone else. In 1995, he sponsored the Congressional Accountability Act, which for the first time applied to Congress various civil rights, employment and labor laws that the politicians had imposed on the rest of the country.

In 2009, Mr. Grassley thought he had succeeded in doing the same for health care when the Senate Finance Committee approved his amendment to require Members of Congress and staff to obtain insurance via the new ObamaCare exchanges. But when Mr. Reid brought the bill to the floor, its language had mysteriously changed to exempt those Congressional aides who work for committees and party leaders.

In 2010 Mr. Grassley tried again to apply the law to all Congressional personnel and to White House officials. His amendment was defeated by 55 Democrats (plus Socialist Bernie Sanders). However, thanks to Mr. Grassley's earlier success, the law still covered Members of Congress and some of their aides—hence their latest effort to wiggle out of the ObamaCare mandates.

In 2010 Mr. Obama was compelled to say that he would personally join a new insurance exchange. This was an empty gesture since the President has no need for health insurance. He has a team of people devoted to his health and surely no one asks him to present a card to receive treatment.

Congress will eventually find some way to protect itself, but its subterranean scrambling to do so exposes one of ObamaCare's greatest deceptions: That if you like the insurance you have, you'll be able to keep it. Even the people who wrote the law don't believe it.

-- wallstreetjournal.com April 29, 2013

Ron Paul & Jim Rogers: "There's More Chaos to Come"

"They won't take our bank accounts...they'll take our retirement accounts." -- Jim Rogers

"We are going to have a

In the beginning of change the patriot is a scarce man, brave, hated and scorned. When his cause succeeds, however, the timid join him, for then it costs nothing to be a patriot. -- Mark Twain

calamity in economics and political crises as economies worldwide are a lot weaker than they tell us." - Ron Paul

"I would expect that there is going to be a lot more chaos still to come." - Ron Paul

"There are so many distortions because we disobeyed economic law - no matter what Bernanke tells you." - Ron Paul

"Bernanke's whole intellectual career has been dedicated to the study of printing money." - Jim Rogers

"I don't doubt [the confiscation] at all; and they will use force and they'll use intimidation." - Ron Paul

-- zerohedge.com 05/02/2013

Repeal the AUMF Act

By Michael Shank and Matt Southworth

A handful of senators are considering a rewrite of the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), passed after the attacks of 11 September 2001. It allows the US government to wage war at any time, any place and on anyone deemed a threat to national security - with remarkably little evidence needed.

The AUMF opened the doors to the US wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya; attacks on Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and Mali; the new drone bases in Niger and Djibouti; and the killing of American citizens [by drone]. It now emboldens the hawks on the warpath to Syria, Iran and North Korea.

It is time for Congress to speak up. Why? Because, first and foremost, the AUMF contravenes congressional oversight. For example, when the Obama administration sent 100 "military advisors" to Uganda in the name of counterterrorism in 2011, Congress received a simple note from President Obama. No oversight.

More recently, the administration sent a note to Congress saying that it was sending 100 troops to Niger. This week, we sent troops to Mali. Again, no oversight.

Statistics provided by Special Operations Command indicate that special forces groups were operating in 92 countries in March 2013. The AUMF premise is enabling a system of eternal warfare, a reality that is not only financially untenable for a nation in deep debt, but also ethically indefensible.

Second, the AUMF undermines the rule of law. The US broadly categorizes individuals and groups that are loosely or tacitly associated with extremists - in secret and sometimes without evidence - setting a dangerous precedent. If targeted killings by drones are justified as acts of war, they must be

subject to international law on the use of lethal force within the borders of another sovereign nation. Such killings seriously undermine prohibitions in international law against the use of deadly force.

Third, too often defense policy is driven by the defense contractor's bottom line. The defense industry spent over \$130m on lobbying efforts in 2012 alone. There's a reason why unnecessary weapons systems like the F-35 joint strike fighter, a program that now costs the American taxpayer hundreds of billions of dollars, never go away.

It is time to send the 2001 AUMF into the sunset, and to return the checks and balances that policy-makers put in place: the executive and legislative branches must deliberate before waging war. We are making enemies through a feckless, dangerous approach, and it is time to return some censure to our defense apparatus. Otherwise, the AUMF will continue to make us hemorrhage - both blood and, especially, treasure.

-- Guardian UK 07 May 13

Missouri Legislature Bans UN Agenda 21

By Alex Newman

With a veto-proof majority, the Missouri legislature approved a bill protecting private property and due process rights by banning a deeply controversial United Nations "sustainability" scheme known as UN Agenda 21. The legislation now heads to Democrat Governor Jay Nixon, who has not yet taken a public position on the issue.

Alabama approved a law last year prohibiting the international "sustainable development" agenda within the state.

The legislation is short and simple. "Neither the state of Missouri nor any political subdivision shall adopt or implement policy recommendations that deliberately or inadvertently infringe or restrict private property rights without due process, as may be required by policy recommendations originating in, or traceable to Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations in 1992 at its Conference on Environment and Development," defining political subdivisions as cities, counties, public-private partnerships, and other public entities.

The legislation would also bar the state government and all of its political subdivisions from adopting or implementing any other "international law" or "ancillary plan of action" that contravenes the U.S. or Missouri

constitutions. Lawmakers in the "Show-Me" State and around the country say such prohibitions are needed to protect citizens from unelected international bureaucrats seeking to impose their will on Americans — especially considering recent moves by the UN to expand its powers on everything from guns and healthcare to the environment and welfare.

"Since the United Nations has accredited and enlisted numerous nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations to assist in the implementation of its policies relative to Agenda 21 around the world, the state of Missouri and all political subdivisions are prohibited from entering into any agreement with, expending any sum of money for, receiving funds from, contracting services from, or giving financial aid to those nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations as defined in Agenda 21," the Missouri bill states.

The widely criticized UN scheme, adopted by governments and dictatorships at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, has been marketed as a way to make humanity more "sustainable." According to UN documents, however, Agenda 21 essentially seeks to restructure human civilization under the guise of environmentalism.

While the UN plot has not been ratified by the U.S. Senate as required by the Constitution, it has been quietly creeping into states and local communities with prodding and bribes from the federal executive branch. "Here in Arizona, Agenda 21 is slowly creeping into the state," State Sen. Judy Burges who sponsored similar legislation in her state, told *The New American*. "It has its tentacles in everything from the schools to local government all the way up to the state."

Key to foisting the agenda on communities are "non-governmental organizations" (NGOs). Among the primary groups is the Germany-based ICLEI, the International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives. During an interview with *The New American* in Rio last June at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, ICLEI President David Cadman said he did not understand opposition to Agenda 21 and did not believe state governments could ban it.

Some Democrat politicians opposed the bill. House Democrat Leader Jake Hummel, for example, apparently woefully uninformed about Agenda 21 and UN sustainability schemes, absurdly compared the effort to protect private property rights, due

process, and state sovereignty with regulating extraterrestrials.

"Could we talk about space aliens coming down? That could happen," he said. "Do you think we should waste time on a mythical thing?" It was not immediately clear whether Rep. Hummel was unaware of the existence of Agenda 21, which is touted all over the UN's websites, or was simply engaged in a strange attempt at humor or ridicule.

"Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, Governments, and Major Groups in every area in which human impacts (sic) on the environment," the UN admits on its website. Even the relatively tame summary has sparked suspicions from analysts, who point out that virtually every aspect of human existence has some "impact" on the "environment." The UN even claims that carbon dioxide — a gas exhaled by everyone on Earth and required for all plant life — is a "pollutant" in need of a global CO2 regulation regime.

If the legislation becomes law, Missouri would be the second state after Alabama to protect private property, state sovereignty, individual liberties, and due process rights by officially banning the controversial UN program. Recent bids to ban the agenda in Arizona and Oklahoma almost succeeded, and multiple other states are working to adopt similar laws. In addition, numerous state and county governments have adopted powerful resolutions blasting Agenda 21 as a "socialist" and "communist" plot completely at odds with American values and constitutional self-government.

While the UN has found a determined ally in much of the establishment media and among some extremist Democrats, the effort to quash Agenda 21 is gaining momentum. The Republican Party officially opposes it, and even liberty-minded Democrats have joined the movement to protect private property and national sovereignty.

-- The New American, 09 May 2013

Obama: Ignore those warning of government tyranny

"Unfortunately, you've grown up hearing voices that incessantly warn of government as nothing more than some separate, sinister entity...They'll warn that tyranny always lurking just around the corner. You should reject these voices. Because what they

suggest is that our brave, and creative, and unique experiment in self-rule is somehow just a sham with which we can't be trusted." — Pres. Barack Obama speech May 5, 2013 to the graduating class at Ohio State U.

-- www.storyleak.com May 6, 2013

Ed.: Could it be, Mr. President, the warnings suggest that tyranny (government) threatens self-rule (not that the principle of self-rule is a sham).

Busch Brewing heir resigns long-time NRA membership

The heir to the Busch brewing family's fortune Thursday resigned his lifetime membership to the National Rifle Association because of the group's opposition to background checks for all commercial gun sales.

Adolphus Busch IV wrote: "I fail to see how the NRA can disregard the overwhelming will of its members who see background checks as reasonable," the Huffington Post reports.

The NRA, the capital's most-powerful lobbying force, opposes all gun control measures.

"The NRA's current strategic focus clearly places priority on the needs of gun and ammunition manufacturers while disregarding the opinions of your 4 million individual members," Busch wrote.

Busch joined the NRA in 1975, but said the group has moved in a direction he does not agree with.

"One only has to look at the makeup of the 75-member board of directors, dominated by manufacturing interests, to confirm my point. The NRA appears to have evolved into the lobby for gun and ammunition manufacturers rather than gun owners," he said in his letter. -- newsmax.com April 19, 2013

How States Are Making It a Felony to Enforce Federal Gun Laws

In mid-April, Kansas passed a law asserting that federal gun regulations do not apply to guns made and owned in Kansas. Under the law, Kansans could manufacture and sell semi-automatic weapons in-state without a federal license or any federal oversight.

Kansas' "Second Amendment Protection Act" backs up its states' rights claims with a penalty aimed at federal agents: when dealing with "Made in Kansas" guns, any attempt to enforce federal law is now a felony. Bills similar to Kansas' law have been introduced in at least 37 other states. An even broader bill is on the desk of Alaska

Gov. Sean Parnell. That bill would exempt any gun owned by an Alaskan from federal regulation. In Missouri, a bill declaring federal gun laws "null and void" passed by an overwhelming majority in the state house, and is headed for debate in the senate.

Mobilizing the pre-Civil-War doctrine of "nullification," these bills assert that Congress has overstepped its ability to regulate guns — and that states, not the Supreme Court, have the ultimate authority to decide whether a law is constitutional or not.

Many observers see nullification bills as pure political theater, "the ultimate triumph of symbolism over substance," as UCLA law Professor Adam Winkler put it. He said he doubts the laws will ever be enforced, and, if they are, expects them to be struck down by the courts.

Winkler and others say nullification laws violate the Constitution, which makes federal law "the supreme law of the land...anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding."

But the growing number of such bills -- which have passed by large majorities in at least one chamber of seven state legislatures--highlight the challenge gun control advocates face in their attempt to fight for gun regulation at the state level.

It also shows how nullification is fast becoming a mainstream option for state politicians. In Pennsylvania, 76 state legislators signed on to sponsor a measure that would invalidate any new federal ban of certain weapons or ammunition. The bill would impose a minimum penalty of one year in prison for federal agents who attempt to enforce any new law.

Supporters of nullification are not simply frustrated at what they see as congressional and presidential overreach. During a hearing about one of the nullification bills she had introduced, Tennessee State Sen. Mae Beavers called the Supreme Court a "dictatorship."

"You think that the Supreme Court is the ultimate arbiter of any of these laws. I don't believe that. I don't believe it was ever granted the authority under the Constitution," Beavers was quoted as saying in The Tennessean.

The Supreme Court rejected nullification in 1958, after Southern states tried to use the concept to avoid desegregating public schools. "No state legislator or executive or judicial officer can war against the Constitution without violating his solemn oath to support it," the Court ruled.

The concept of nullification has had a resurgence since the beginning of President Obama's administration. More than a dozen states have introduced bills to nullify Obamacare.

The Tenth Amendment Center, a group that advocates nullification as the solution to a range of policy issues, from marijuana legalization to Obamacare, publishes model gun nullification language.

The roots of guns law nullification trace back nearly a decade.

In 2004, Montana gun rights activist Gary Marbut drafted a bill stating that any guns manufactured and retained in Montana are not part of interstate commerce, and thus are exempt from federal regulation. The bill became law in 2009.

The day the Montana law went into effect, Marbut filed a lawsuit in federal court asserting the right to manufacture weapons in the state without a federal license. The suit, now before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, has been backed by a large group of supporters, including Gun Owners of America, the Second Amendment Foundation, the Cato Institute, the Goldwater Institute, and a group of nine attorneys general.

Representatives of Goldwater and the Cato Institute said they see the case as not primarily about guns. Instead, they say, it's meant to persuade the Supreme Court to roll back the Congress' power to regulate commerce within a state.

"The likelihood of victory is low," said Trevor Burrus, a research fellow at the Cato Institute's Center for Constitutional Studies

In Kansas, Patricia Stoneking, the president of Kansas State Rifle Association, said she was recommending that Kansans not start manufacturing guns under the new law until its legal status has been clarified.

Even if Kansas' law ends up being struck down in court, "We actually are not going to roll over and play dead and say, 'Oh, no, shame on us,'" Stoneking said. "The fight will not be over."

-- Lois Beckett, ProPublica 04 May 2013

Waco: A New Revelation

20th Anniversary Commemoration Set

This film triggered a Special Council Investigation of the Waco tragedy and caused the Department of Justice and the FBI to reverse their long held positions on this event. After six years of painstaking investigation this feature-length documentary presents revelations about the events that led to

the deaths of 79 men, women and children at Mount Carmel, Texas on April 19th 1993.

Based on physical evidence recovered from the official Waco evidence lockers, chilling testimonies from former FBI, Special Forces and CIA operatives, and interviews with Branch Davidian survivors, "WACO, A New Revelation" presents evidence addressing these questions:

*Why didn't the Branch Davidians and their children come out of the compound?

*Did the FBI actually start the Waco fire using pyrotechnic devices?

*What was the role of the elite U.S. Army Delta force at Waco during the final tank assault - and why was their presence denied until now?

*Does the trial of the Waco evidence lead to the White House?

Included with the main film is "The F.L.I.R. project", a 35 minute production which presents evidence from forward looking infra-red film footage. As has been previously commented in "The Flir Project: Revealing Danforth's Deceit" by Cletus Nelson --, *"Indeed, the FLIR Project suggests that the high-profile investigation was cleverly rigged from the outset with government investigators using alternative weapons, different ammunition, a malfunctioning camera, and other stratagems to ensure the exoneration of FBI officials."*

This film is available for \$21.95 from the JPFO Store, P.O. Box 270143, Hartford, WI 53027

Gun Homicide Rate Down 49% since 1993 Peak; Public Unaware

Gun homicide and other violent gun crimes are strikingly lower now than during their peak in the mid-1990s, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of government data.

Compared with 1993, the peak of U.S. gun homicides, the firearm homicide rate was 49% lower in 2010.

The victimization rate for other violent crimes with a firearm—assaults, robberies and sex crimes—was 75% lower in 2011 than in 1993

Most Americans are unaware that gun crime is lower today than it was two decades ago. 56% of Americans believe gun crime is higher than 20 years ago and only 12% think it is lower.

Mass shootings are a relatively small share of shootings. According to a Bureau of Justice Statistics review, homicides that claimed at least three lives accounted for less than 1% of all homicide deaths from 1980 to 2008.

These homicides, most of which are shootings, increased as a share of all homicides from 0.5% in 1980 to 0.8% in 2008.

There were 31,672 deaths from guns in the U.S. in 2010. Most (19,392) were suicides; the gun suicide rate has been higher than the gun homicide rate since at least 1981, and the gap is wider than it was in 1981.

Researchers have studied the decline in firearm crime and violent crime for many years, though there is no consensus as to why it happened.

The post-World War II baby boom, which produced a large number of people in the high-crime ages of 15 to 20 in the 1960s and 1970s, helped drive crime up in those years.

A review by the National Academy of Sciences cited a decline in crime rates in the early 1980s as the young boomers got older, then a flare-up by mid-decade in conjunction with a rising street market for crack cocaine and recruitment of younger drug sellers with greater willingness to use guns. By the early 1990s, crack markets withered in part because of lessened demand, and the vibrant national economy made it easier for even low-skilled young people to find jobs rather than get involved in crime.

At the same time, a rising number of people ages 30 and older were incarcerated, due in part to stricter laws, which helped restrain violence. It is less clear, researchers say, that innovative policing strategies and police crackdowns on use of guns by younger adults played a significant role in reducing crime.

Additional explanations as to why crime levels plunged include increased access to abortion and lessened exposure to lead that causes brain damage that could be associated with violent behavior.

Substantial variation within and across regions and localities complicates any attempt to find a single cause for national trends. Among the variations of interest to researchers are policing techniques, punishment policies, culture, economics and residential segregation.

A disproportionate share of gun homicide victims in 2010 are black (55%, compared with the 13% of the population). Whites were 25% of victims but 65% of the population. Hispanics were 17% of victims and 16% of the population.

-- www.pewsocialtrends.org May 7, 2013

Ed.: Researchers might want to consider John Lott's *More Guns, Less*

Crime for a possible explanation of falling crime rates.

Gun rally speaker to crowd: 'Be the best lawbreaker you can be'

HARTFORD — The theme of the gun rally at the state Capitol was tyranny, and the need of an armed citizenry to resist such.

Michael Vanderboegh of Alabama had the crowd cheering, as did other speakers who offered this message tied to their interpretation of the Second Amendment.

The rally was organized by the Connecticut Citizens Defense League.

"Civil war is staring us in the face," Vanderboegh warned, blaming it on those who voted for enhanced gun controls in Maryland, Colorado, New York and here, which he deemed to be unconstitutional.

Vanderboegh told the estimated 1,500 people that if they wished to "stay free ... you can do no less than to become the lawbreakers that they have unconstitutionally made of you. ... Resolve to be the very best lawbreaker you can be."

The loudest cheers came when he said that he smuggled some 30-round magazines into the state.

The gun law adopted April 4 put 100 more weapons on the state's list of banned firearms, and also banned magazines with more than 10 rounds. Citizens who already own them can keep them, but their use is restricted and they must be registered.

"Catch me if you can," Vanderboegh taunted the governor and Republican and Democrat leaders, threatening to be back with more.

John Lott Jr., the author of "More Guns, Less Crime," argued that the three-day waiting period to get a firearm adversely affects those in need of a firearm for personal safety the most. He said registration rules tie up police who could be put to better use and said fees only hurt low income people from buying guns.

Lott is a controversial figure whose methodology for his book has

been widely discredited by other academicians.

Cheryl Lemos, membership coordinator for CCDL, which jumped from 2,499 to more than 7,000 after the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown Dec. 14, said the Second Amendment is all about "the balance of power."

"The Constitution gives the Congress the power to raise and support a standing army. The people have a Second Amendment to keep that standing Army in check," she said.

Saul Cornell, a history professor at Fordham University and an expert on the Second Amendment, said there is a great deal of misinformation about the Second Amendment which focuses on a "privatized view of guns not defined by civic obligation ... this is very much kind of anti-government, almost insurrectionary. The Founding Fathers were not anarchist libertarians."

He made his remarks at a meeting sponsored by the Newtown Action Alliance.

He said the Constitution was adopted to prevent insurrections, not encourage them. "They believed in something called well-regulated liberty," Cornell said and came down hard on rebellions. One of the most well-known is Shays Rebellion, where George Washington lead the forces against them.

The professor said the only crime defined in the Constitution is treason, which is taking up arms against the government. He said it is "ridiculous and historically inaccurate" to essentially interpret the Second Amendment as overriding the treason clause.

Stewart Rhodes of Montana, founder of the Oath Keepers, compared the activists to the "first wave of Normandy Beach in this current battle for the Republic."

He said the purpose of the Second Amendment is not about hunting or personal defense.

"It is about the military capacity of the American people ... of you to be the militia. ... You will not be secure and you will not be free unless

the military power of this nation is in your hands," Rhodes said.

To those who argue that civilians should not have weapons of war Rhodes said: "You tell them it is a weapon of war and it is supposed to be in my hands. We are supposed to have the same military capacity as any infantry squad, any infantry platoon."

Among those in attendance was Charles Pomeroy, who said he objects to the new gun law because it "creates two classes of citizens, those who are in a protected class — law enforcement — and citizens who have limited rights." Law enforcement is allowed AR-15s and high-capacity magazines when acting in a professional capacity. "It should be the choice of the citizen to pick whatever they think is right," he said of what firearms to possess.

Pomeroy pointed to the situation in Watertown, Mass., when thousands of law enforcement officials, both federal and state, looking for Boston Marathon bombing suspect, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, flooded the area while residents were asked to stay indoors. "They were running around with their AR-15s protecting themselves, while people are stuck in their homes with nothing," Pomeroy said.

-- Mary E. O'Leary, New Haven Register April 20, 2013

Duty

"The liberties of our country, the freedoms of our civil Constitution are worth defending at all hazards; it is our duty to defend them against all attacks. We have received them as a fair inheritance from our worthy ancestors. They purchased them for us with toil and danger and expense of treasure and blood. It will bring a mark of everlasting infamy on the present generation — enlightened as it is — if we should suffer them to be wrested from us by violence without a struggle, or to be cheated out of them by the artifices of designing men." — Samuel Adams

NJM, P.O. Box 10176, Trenton New Jersey 08650

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www.njmilitia.org

info@njmilitia.org

walnor@keepandbeararms.com

Middlesex County, Art (732) 607-0833

Morris County, Bill (973) 361-3241

Johnson County, TX, Earl (817) 783-2375

Wake County, NC, Dave (919) 295-4008

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Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____